

175
A
L E T T E R
O F
A D V I C E
FROM A
F A T H E R
TO HIS
S O N,

Just entering into HOLY ORDERS.

PROVERBS X. I.

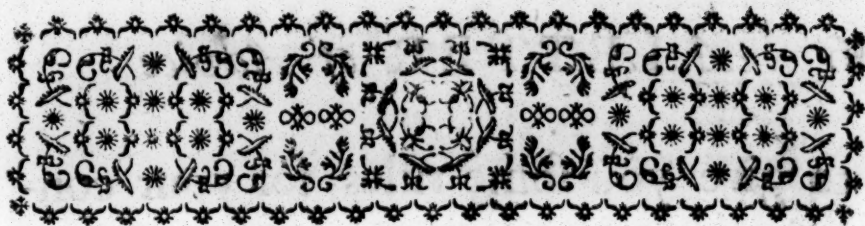
A wise Son maketh a glad Father; but a foolish Son
is the Heaviness of his Mother.

L O N D O N :

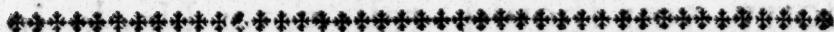
Printed for GEORGE KEITH, at the Bible and
Crown in Grace-church-Street.

M D C C L X I I .





A
L E T T E R
O F
A D V I C E
F R O M A
FATHER to his SON.



DEAR TOM,

AS you have now passed your
A examination for Orders, and
are so very soon to take up-
on you the ministerial function, I think
it a duty highly incumbent upon me,

A 3 to

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to give you some rules for your conduct, the observance of which will not fail of rendering you a comfort to your parents, and of gaining you the esteem and patronage of those, whose friendship deserves your every possible endeavour to acquire and cultivate.

But first let me remark, that I am sorry you should tell your Uncle in your last, that you look upon your subscription to the Church of *England* Articles of Religion, as a sufficient reason for preaching the doctrines contained in them, and that you should be so dreadfully uneasy concerning the guilt of perjury, if you
do

do not. You say, " That from the
" strictest and most impartial exami-
" nation, you find them to be entire-
" ly conformable to the sacred Ora-
" cles of truth ; and though you can-
" not pretend to affirm whether or
" no the generality of the Clergy are
" of the same opinion, yet this is cer-
" tain, that either they do, or they
" do not believe the doctrines con-
" tained in them : Now," (say you)
" supposing the negative, where is the
" man of common honesty, who *for*
" *the sake of filthy lucre*, will sub-
" scribe to doctrines, of which he be-
" lieves not a word? — Supposing
" the affirmative, is it not the high-

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“ est degree of hypocritical wicked-
“ nefs to disguise, yea, to disavow the
“ truth, for fear of worldly frowns, or
“ hopes of worldly favour.”—— You
conclude your letter with declaring,
“ that whatever great names you
“ might have to countenance you in
“ your apostasy, it is your fixed reso-
“ lution conscientiously to preach the
“ doctrines you have subscribed to,
“ and never to be instrumental in
“ undermining the foundations of
“ that excellent Church you have
“ so solemnly bound yourself to de-
“ fend.”

Ah! my dear TOM, however specious this reasoning may appear, I must
tell

tell you it betrays great weakness of conscience, and that you ought to lay aside these needless scruples. There is a good old saying, that *When we are at Rome, we should do as they do at Rome.* Besides, you should consider that now is your time to advance yourself in the world, and to make some provision for your relations. Remember St. Paul says, *If any man provide not for his own, he is worse than an Infidel.* Now how do you think to provide for your own household, or even for yourself, if you are determined to abide by such antiquated stuff as the doctrines of the Reformation, and of the Church of *England*?

Look

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Look about you, Tom, is it not an evident fact, that those few ministers, who are so over-scrupulous about their subscriptions, and who preach the doctrines contained in the ARTICLES, HOMILIES, and LITURGY, are almost universally despised and ridiculed ; and are so far from being advanced to any lucrative dignities in the Church, that some of them are ready to starve for want of employment ? Is not every method used to oppress and silence them ? Are not the pulpits denied them wherever they go ? Are not some of them who are only in Deacons orders, refused Priests ordination ? In short, are they not condemned as Hereticks,

reticks, Schismaticks, Methodists, Enthusiasts, and what not? While those who prudently conform to the doctrines and spirit of the times, are as much caressed and encouraged, as these are hated and despised.

Now reflect with yourself, dear TOM, how you should like to be branded with these odious names of *Methodist* and *Enthusiast*, and to lose the friendship of Lord * * *, and the Bishop of * * * ? and you know as well as I can tell you, that this must be the case, if you make such ado about your conscience, and your subscription to the Articles.

Oh

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Oh TOM, however this might affect you, it would be the heart-breaking of your poor Mother and me.

Hoping therefore you will not suffer yourself to be hurried into particularities by any causeless scruples—The first piece of advice I would offer you, is to lay aside all those old-fashioned trumpery books you are continually poring over, which you told me some time ago were the works of the Reformers, and of several pious and learned Bishops of our Church in her *better* days. But as highly as you may think of the Reformers, and of these pious and learned Bishops, as you are pleased to call them, it is very certain
that

that they are now looked upon as little better than dreaming old wives. Instead therefore of this obsolete trash, I would propose to your study and imitation, a CLARKE, an HOADLEY, or a SYKES; being well assured that the doctrines maintained by these writers have gained them numberless admirers in the high and polite world; and certain it is, that every clergyman who is careful to tread in their steps, stands the best chance of being promoted to their dignities.

But though I trust I have said sufficient to prevent you from inculcating those absurd doctrines of the *Articles* from your pulpit, yet if ever you should
be

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be led into discourse concerning them, be sure to throw out some hints that they were drawn up in times of ignorance and darkness, and that few great and learned men could ever assent to them. --- I know the Vth Canon of the Church passes the heavy sentence of excommunication on^d every impugner of any of the XXXIX *Articles*, but you have no need to be apprehensive of any danger from that quarter; whilst the impugners themselves have the authority in their own hands.

The better to maintain your own cause, fail not to condemn all those by wholesale as rank *Methodists* and *Enthusiasts*,

thusiasts, who preach the doctrines of the Church of *England*, particularly those of the IX, X, XI, XII, and XIII *Articles*, setting forth man's fallen and depraved state by nature: His helplessness and incapacity to good: The absolute necessity of a divine illumination, and of the workings, feelings, and inspiration of the SPIRIT of grace to turn him to GOD: His free justification by faith only (as apprehending the REDEEMER's merits :) His utter inability to do any works pleasant to GOD, (be they outwardly ever so specious) before he is thus inspired by the SPIRIT, and justified by the merits of CHRIST.

What

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What an heap of strange unintelligible jargon is here about Illumination and Inspiration? What ridiculous distinctions concerning works before, and works after justification? No wonder those preachers who stun their hearers with such out-of-the-way stuff, are regarded as downright madmen.

Let no consideration therefore tempt you to spare these persons, but rail against them as *Deceivers*, *Methodists*, and *crack-brain'd Enthusiasts*: These are appellations which few will ask you to explain, and you will always find the multitude ready to join
in

in opposing they know not what, and
they know not why.

The better to prevent the before-mentioned Preachers from having the least influence over any of your flock or friends that may chance to hear them, be sure to represent them as scurrilous abusers of the DIGNIFIED and ORTHODOX CLERGY, that if they should hear any cautions against *false teachers*, and such as subscribe to one doctrine, and preach another, all this may be interpreted not in the least as mentioned to preserve the souls of the people from error, but as the mark of a fac-

B... tious

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tious spirit, *to draw people from their Parish-churches*, and as downright abuse of OUR REGULAR MINISTERS. Fail not to do all this with the appearance of regret, expressing your deep concern for the melancholy state of the Church, and that men should be carried by the workings of fancy, and heat of constitution, into such wild flights of Enthusiasm.

The careful observance of this conduct will, I trust, be sufficient to prejudice your hearers against this sort of Preachers, whilst you yourself will be universally adored for your CANDOR and ORTHODOXY.

But

from a FATHER to his SON. 19

But having as yet told you little more than what I would have you avoid, it is time I should give you a short sketch of what I would have you make the chief burden of your discourses. And here let me advise you to speak much of THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN NATURE, MORAL RECTITUDE, and THE FITNESS OF THINGS. Harangue your congregation on THE BEAUTIES OF VIRTUE, and the DEFORMITY OF VICE: for which purpose you may gather excellent hints from PLUTARCH, SENECA, TULLY, and some of our celebrated *Tragedies*. The higher

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class will idolize you for your Sermons on these subjects, especially if the style be polite and elegant. As to those of a lower station, it matters little whether they comprehend you or not ; the less they understand, the more will they reverence your learning.

You would also do well frequently to inculcate the necessity of innocent diversions to relax the mind from religious duties, and to expose the *folly, sin, and danger* of running into extremes, and being *righteous over-much*. By this means every one of your hearers will rank his own favourite pleasure in the list of these *innocent diversions,*

from a FATHER to his SON. 21

sions, and will be particularly careful not to incur the guilt of being righteous over-much.

It would not be amiss, if you were now and then to preach upon such texts as these : *The friendship of the world is enmity with God ? who-soever therefore will be a friend of the world, is an enemy of God^(a). Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him^(b). Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all*

B 3

man-

^(a) James iv. 4.

^(b) 1 John ii. 15.

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manner of evil against you falsely for my sake ; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven^(c).

If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross daily, and deny himself, and follow me^(d). —

In handling these subjects, you may take occasion to shew, that as these expressions were addressed to the primitive converts, consequently they were intended only for primitive times, and that by *the friendship of the world* we are to understand that of the Heathen or idolatrous world ; for that a prudent compliance

(c) Matt. v. 11, 12. (d) Mark viii. 34.

pliance with, and *love of the world*, is now very consistent with *the love of GOD*. That all the *persecution for righteousness sake*, so often mentioned in scripture, is entirely to be confined to the several persecutions under the *Pagan* Emperors, and does not at all relate to the present flourishing ages of Christianity, wherein our religion is happily established by the civil powers, and *Kings* are become its *nursing-fathers*, and *Queens* its *nursing-mothers*. And as for those injunctions of *taking up our cross daily, and denying ourselves, that we may follow CHRIST*, they are not to be taken in that narrow literal sense which some mistaken Zealots may imagine.

Let your example in the world confirm what you inculcate from your pul-

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pit. Be always ready to *hunt* and take a *cheerful glass* with the 'SQUIRE: or to *dance* and *play at Cards* with his LADY: by this means you will acquire the character of a worthy *good sort* of man as ever breath'd; and if the 'SQUIRE has any better Living than that you possess, you will stand an excellent chance of obtaining it*.

Another remark I must make to you is, that few *polite* Preachers ever
mention

* You know Mr ——. It is not three Years since he took Orders, and he has already a Rectory of £250 *per Annum*, in a *fine sporting country*, and *easy duty*, which Sir *Humphry* bought on purpose to have him in his neighbourhood; for to do him justice he is a *special Toast-master*, and can *throw a Bowl*, or *give a View-hollow*, with any man in Christendom. His own choice was the army, but his father all along designed him for the Church, on account of a family-living which he will have when the present incumbent dies, and which *by a Dispensation* is tenable with the other.

from a FATHER to his SON. 25

mention those harsh, uncouth words, so often used in *Scripture*, and in the ARTICLES, HOMILIES, and LITURGY, HELL and DAMNATION: the former of which you may very well call *the place of torment*, and the latter may be expressed by *final perdition*. —

Whenever you have occasion to mention the name of GOD, any of the following titles may be substituted in the stead, and will sound very pretty: THE WISE AUTHOR OF NATURE, THE GREAT DISPOSER OF ALL EVENTS, PROVIDENCE, THE DEITY, THE SUPREME BEING, &c. &c. — A discourse now and then upon the probability of the *Existence*
of

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of a GOD, and of the *Soul's Immortality*, may not be improper. The works of PLATO, THALES, ARISTOTLE, and some of our eminent Divines of modern date, will furnish you with many excellent arguments in defence of these truths.

But I had like to have forgot one very material caution, without which I must not conclude my epistle: and that is, whenever you intend to say any thing in your Sermon against those Preachers, who maintain the doctrines of man's original *corruption* and *helplessness*, the *insufficiency* of our own
right-

righteousness to justify us before GOD, and in consequence hereof the absolute necessity of a *new birth*, and of the Illumination, Guidance, Inspiration and inward Comforts of the HOLY GHOST; be sure to run over as quick as you can, and in a very low voice, all those petitions in the several parts of the *Liturgy*, where you are obliged to acknowledge the natural sinfulness and weakness of man, to pray for the enlightning, comforting, and regenerating influences of the SPIRIT, to renounce all trust in, and dependence upon our own righteousness, founding all hope of acceptance on CHRIST alone :

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alone: for though many of these prayers were drawn up in the same times of darkness and ignorance, and by the very same persons that the *Articles* and *Homilies* were, yet the less the congregation is aware of the clash and contradiction between the Desk and the Pulpit, the better.

I once intended to have made my Letter somewhat longer, and to have been rather more particular; but as you are so soon to see my very worthy friend the ARCHDEACON, I know you will be abundantly made amends by his instructions, for the haste and
omissions

from a FATHER to his SON. 29

omissions of this Epistle, which, however, you may be assured is dictated from the heart of,

Dear TOM,

Your affectionate Father,

* * * *

P. S. Your Mother, who sat by all the while I wrote this, and who is now in tears lest it should not have its proper effect, desires her blessing.



From a Father to his Son
omissions of the Epistle which how
ever you may be assured is directed
from the heart of

Dear Tom

Your affectionate Father

R. S. Your Mother who has by all
the while I **6333** and who is
now in tears lest it should not have its
proper effect desires her blessing

Wm. M.
1844

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